



Pipeline Safety and Responsibility Act of 2011 (Speier)

Elements carried over from HR 22, The Pipeline Safety and Community Empowerment Act:

- Requires pipeline owner and operators to install proven and effective remote or automatic shut off valves on existing pipelines in high risk and high density areas, high seismic risk areas, and in all new construction or replaced pipelines;
- Mandates inspections by “smart pigs” – small robotic devices that inspect the insides of pipelines -- or by use of other inspection methods certified by the Secretary of Transportation as equally effective at finding corrosion; and prohibits natural gas pipelines from operating at high pressure if they cannot be inspected using the most effective inspection technology;
- Requires strong new disclosure and notification requirements so that homeowners and residents know the location of pipelines in their community;
- Prioritizes old pipelines and pipelines in high risk seismic areas for the highest level of safety oversight;
- Requires pipeline owners and operators to provide state regulators and state and local emergency responders with their emergency response plans and other critical information they need before the fact, and not wait for the utility to provide after the disaster has happened;
- Requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to review and approve all pipeline operator public education and safety programs; and
- Requires that any standards or procedures adopted by reference in DOT regulations—for example American Petroleum Institute public education standards—be easily available free of charge to the public (currently the public has to pay API to obtain a copy of these standards).

New Requirements Drawn from Results of Investigation into San Bruno PG&E Explosion:

- Requires PHMSA to establish a database for pipelines removed from service--Operators would be required to report to PHMSA when a pipeline segment is removed from service, the reason for the replacement, the manufacturer of the pipe, age of the pipe, condition of the pipe and its welds, signs of corrosion and history of installation.
- If an operator does not have documentation that a pipeline segment has been pressure tested, would require operator to do one of the following within a timeframe determined by PHMSA:
 - Reduce pressure 20%;
 - Hydro-test;
 - Replace the pipe.

- Requires an operator to report any increase over MAOP to PHMSA or its delegated authority within 24 hours
- Requires every operator to provide to PHMSA or its delegated authority its replacement plan for any pipeline installed prior 1971 that is located in a high consequence area. Each plan shall contain a timeframe for replacement beginning with the highest risk pipeline. Age and inability to use internal inspection devices would be included in calculating risk. The plan shall contain an estimated cost of replacement.
- Requires an operator's integrity management program be audited once every three years by PHMSA or its delegated authority. An operator must respond in writing to an audit exception identified by PHMSA or its state delegated authority within 30 days and that if the audit exception is deemed critical, the response shall be immediate and may be made orally, but in no case, shall the response exceed 24 hours from the time received. Any verbal response shall be followed up in writing within three days.